



ReMade in America & Peers Paving the Path Two Innovative Work Programs, One Location

iFoster's Dream Factory is a "For Us, By Us" social enterprise that employs foster youth to solve problems while giving them the training, credentials and work experience they need to earn jobs and build careers in the circular economy, mental health and social services. Built upon iFoster's award-winning AmeriCorps program that the Administration for Children and Families has evaluated as a promising practice for foster youth employment, 1,000 foster youth will graduate to self-sustaining professional jobs in the next 3 years, achieving their dreams and positively impacting their peers and the State of California.

Turning Climate Crisis into Careers

The United States faces a mounting textile waste crisis, with 11.3 million tons of waste generated annually, driven by fast fashion and the disposal of 8 million plush toys. Synthetic materials like polyester can take up to 500 years to decompose, with California alone spending \$99 million annually on textile waste management.

California's Senate Bill 707, the "Responsible Textile Recovery Act of 2024," introduces the first U.S. Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) program for textiles, shifting waste management costs from taxpayers to producers. This legislation mandates a systemic overhaul of the clothing, footwear, and plush toy industries to combat the environmental impact of these products.

Within this crisis corrective action plan lies opportunity. Opportunity for new career paths and entrepreneurial businesses that reap economic benefits from a new, environmentally friendly way of doing business.

ReMade in America

iFoster ReMade is a "For Us, By Us" social enterprise that employs foster youth to solve our climate crisis, build their skills and career paths in the rapidly emerging circular economy, and support their peers.

ReMade Academy Program Model

- **Skill Building:** Youth gain hands-on experience in high-demand circular economy fields of product design, sorting/grading, remanufacturing, reverse supply chain logistics, and merchandising.
- **"Comfies" Product:** Youth design, produce and sell the first U.S. remanufactured plush toys and one of only a few plush toys produced in the USA.
- **Comfie Clothing Kits:** Youth manage reverse supply chain logistics by creating and distributing clothing kits to kids in foster care with reuse donations from brand partners.

Potential for Impact Over the Next 3 Years

ReMade achieves positive cash flow in its first year.

- **Economic Impact:** 400 foster youth graduates in Los Angeles earning \$4 Million
- **Social Impact:** 270,000 children in foster care receive \$40 Million in new clothing and toys
- **Environmental Impact:** 230 tons of textile waste diverted from California landfills



Peers Paving the Path

America's Mental Health Crisis

America's mental health system has been pushed to the breaking point. Today, more than 20% of adults and 33% of children and youth live with a mental illness, yet nearly 50% cannot access timely treatment. A paralyzing workforce shortage has resulted in approximately 40% of the U.S. population living in designated mental health professional shortage areas.

This crisis is not only a public health emergency but also a massive economic burden on tax payors as Medicaid accounts for a quarter of all U.S. spending on mental health and substance use disorder treatment. This is because vulnerable and low-income populations disproportionately make up the human and economic costs of this crisis.

The economic cost of this crisis is not contained to healthcare expenditures alone. Mental health and substance abuse disorders cost America ~ \$282 billion a year in lost workplace productivity. This is 1.7% of America's total GDP, or the yearly costs of an average economic recession. And for those impacted, it can result in a lifetime of failure to achieve self-sufficiency and productive citizenry.

Peers Paving the Path

iFoster's "Peers Paving the Path" Program specifically targets system-involved youth, turning their lived experiences into professional certifications.

Federally Registered Apprenticeship Program

- **Professional Certification:** 2,000 hours of paid training and work experience leading to Medicaid Peer Support Specialist certification, making their services Medicaid billable and sustainable.
- **Skill Development :** Comprehensive training in case management, healthcare basics, and "soft skills" such as client communication and secondary trauma management.
- **Career Scaffolding:** Over 1,700 hours of supervised work experience at local community organizations, preparing apprentices for lead case manager roles, and providing enhanced care management services.
- **Holistic Support:** Weekly coaching, peer mentorship, and wrap-around services to remove employment barriers and ensure graduation.

Potential for Impact Over the Next 3 Years

Peers Paving the Path achieves positive cash flow in its first year.

- **Economic Impact:** 600 foster youth graduates in Los Angeles earning \$7.5 Million
- **Social Impact:** 3,500 transition-age foster youth achieve self-sufficiency with peer support

Have Questions?

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